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*For Immediate Release*

## **Knoxville Chamber Seeks Nominations for 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Pinnacle Business Awards**

The Knoxville Chamber is pleased to announce it is now accepting nominations for the 2014 Annual Pinnacle Business Awards, presented by BB&T. For 10 years, the Pinnacle awards have celebrated excellence in Knoxville's business community through nine award categories. The categories highlight the range of businesses that make up the thriving Knoxville-area economy, and honor contributions to business enterprise and the greater community.

The categories include:

### **Impact Award**

This award will be presented to an East Tennessee business that displays a commitment to making East Tennessee a better place to live through the development and support of a community project or program. The Impact Award winner should be able to demonstrate the ability to improve community conditions that make a significant contribution or impact on our region. Such contributions might include: improving education, improving healthcare, pursuing environmental excellence, performing community service, and influencing other organizations to partner for these purposes.

### **Innovator Award**

This award will be given to an East Tennessee business that has developed a new technology, innovative product or service or applied a business process or service in an innovative way. The winner will be able to quantify its growth and provide a detailed explanation of the new product, service, process or system. Nominee should provide a description of implementing innovative solutions to achieve operational efficiency and business results.

### **Minority-Owned Business Excellence Award**

This award will be presented to a successful East Tennessee minority-owned business which is independently-owned, operated and controlled by minority group members. Minority group members are defined as U.S. citizens who are Asian, Black, Hispanic or Native American. Ownership by minority individuals means the business is at least 51 percent owned by such individuals and the management and daily operations are controlled by those minority group members.

**Woman-Owned Business Excellence Award**

This award will be presented to a successful East Tennessee woman-owned business which is independently-owned, operated and controlled by a female or females. The enterprise must be at least 51 percent owned by one or more women and its management and daily business operations must be controlled by one or more women.

**Small Business Excellence Award**

This award will be presented to an East Tennessee small business that has consistently grown its workforce and revenue. Nominees should be businesses started in the Knoxville region and have 50 employees or less company-wide. The winner will be able to demonstrate its ability to overcome obstacles including access to capital, operational efficiency, control of expenses, customer loyalty and distribution of products or services and should provide a historical index of growth in revenues and workforce.

**Business Excellence Award**

Awarded to a company headquartered in East Tennessee or a company with a significant presence in East Tennessee, that has shown remarkable profitability, growth and stability. Nominees must be recognized regionally, nationally and/or internationally in their respective business sector, while demonstrating leadership in the sector as well. Nominated companies should have made significant investments in facilities and employees. There will be two winners in this category, one for companies with 51-200 employees company-wide and another for companies with 200+ employees company-wide.

**Young Entrepreneur Award**

This award will be presented to a young professional, 40 years of age or younger as of May 2, 2014, who lives and works in East Tennessee and has achieved success while overcoming obstacles, to become one of tomorrow's top business leaders. The winner will have started or is at risk in ownership in their business. They will have used technology or new business practices to move a company from early growth to some maturity.

Nominations will be accepted until Feb. 28 at 5 p.m. Nominated companies and individuals must fill out applications by March 7 to be eligible for an award. The finalists, who will be determined by the Chamber's board of directors, will be celebrated at a black tie optional gala on May 2 at the Knoxville Convention Center.

To nominate a deserving business or young entrepreneur, visit [www.soh.knoxvillechamber.com/nomination/new/](http://www.soh.knoxvillechamber.com/nomination/new/).